



Ana Paula Manuel Laita
Nguluve
2015 AWARD Fellow

Position	Head of Toxicology Sector
Institution	Department of Nutrition and Food, Directorate of Animal Science, Agrarian Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM)
Country	Mozambique
MSc	Environmental Engineer, Technical University of Mozambique, 2009
Mentor	Dr. Carla Meneses, Head of Statistics Unit and Experimental Design, Nutritionist Directorate of Animal Science, IIAM
Research Area	Assessment of the nutritional efficiency and economic viability of using different commercial diets on commercial chicken in southern Mozambique.

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Ana Paula Manuel Laita Nguluve was born and raised in Mozambique’s capital city of Maputo. She completed her high school education in Cuba through a government scholarship, which gave her exposure and a broader view of the world. “If I had not had this opportunity, I may not have a degree today,” she says.

Laita Nguluve started her career in agriculture in 1990, working as a laboratory technician in the Department of Nutrition and Forages at the Animal Production Institute. Here she was tasked with ensuring the quality control of forages for animal consumption. After a few years, the government established the Agrarian Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM) consisting of central units and research sites, which are part of the Directorate of Animal Science. After the merger, she continued working on the chemical analysis of food, feed, and raw materials. She was also working in environmental monitoring in poultry slaughterhouses and incubators, and for quality control of water and hygiene in factory processing plants.

While working, Laita Nguluve obtained a BSc in Environmental Engineering. She was drawn to this field because of the environmental challenges she had observed in her country. “We have many problems in Mozambique with regard to the protection of environmental resources,” she says. However, upon graduation, she did not have an opportunity to work in her field of study. “As this is a new discipline in Mozambique, there are few organizations working in that area and the population is not well aware of its importance,” she explains. She

continued to work at the same institute and was promoted to head of toxicology I sector in the department of nutrition and food, taking over from her AWARD Mentor, Dr. Carla Meneses.

In the laboratory, Laita Nguluve identified a challenge in disposing of chemical reagents that had expired. "We use different kinds of reagents and some reach their expiration date before they have been used," she explains. With support from the institution's leadership, she organized a team of environmental engineers who came up with a strategy for the disposal of chemical waste and identified a company to do it.

In 2013, Laita Nguluve began a master's degree in Chemical and Local Resource Processing at Eduardo Mondlane University. She is currently writing her thesis on the use of a biological additive in fattening broilers. She wants to see her research contribute to food security and poverty alleviation in her country. "The challenge is to find alternative solutions for poultry feed that would minimize production costs," she explains. "The cost of poultry feed is high and this does not necessarily result in healthy weights in poultry products. When we introduce the natural additive, the poultry will grow in a shorter time and attain maturity with better weight, resulting in farmers spending less on feed and thereby improving their profits."

Laita Nguluve expects to complete her master's later in 2015 and will then apply for a PhD in the field of natural resources. "I want to be a recognized scientist in animal nutrition and environmental protection in order to contribute to community development in Mozambique," she asserts. "I want to publish my research results and disseminate them to help people in my country improve their poultry farms, while protecting the environment." She is also eager to share what she learns from AWARD with colleagues in her department.

Even with scarce resources, Laita Nguluve is satisfied with her work when she achieves results. "Sometimes, I have difficulty obtaining equipment but it is still possible to do something even with minimal resources," she notes. Finding time to reconcile her domestic and professional responsibilities is another challenge. "A female scientist is often a mother and a spouse, with many domestic responsibilities, and sometimes she encounters challenges finding time to participate in meetings or conferences," she says. But by coordinating her schedule with her supportive husband, Laita Nguluve is mastering the juggling act.

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